ther Gaponi, tried to intervene on their behalf and, when his plea was rejected, called on the workers to strike. The newspapers described him as the leader of a powerful union that covered all workers in the Russian capital, but this sounded very strange to me. I had never heard of either the holy father with the Italian name[2] or his union.

On January 6, the papers got out an extra: The general strike is spreading in St. Petersburg; strikers clash with the police; troops are being sent to the industrial precincts. Events seemed to be following the classical revolutionary pattern with which I was familiar from books. I was bewildered. The strike itself did not surprise me; I had read in illegal publications that a revolt of Russian workers was imminent. What was surprising was the outbreak of a revolution without apparent participation of the revolutionary parties and under the leadership of a fantastic priest with an Italian name.

The next reports indicated that the strike was spreading and that Father Gaponi had decided on a new step. On January 9, all workers in the capital were to march to the Winter Palace, and Father Gaponi was to kneel before the Tsar and hand him a petition for the eight-hour day for workers, an immediate end of the war, and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

The evening editions reported increasing tension in St. Petersburg. The police had warned the public that crowds would not be admitted to the Winter Palace. Father Gaponi replied that no force could put itself between him and the Tsar.

I had an uneasy feeling of having deserted my real world while I wandered in a strange land in bygone centuries. I left Florence on the first morning train. At Munich I had to wait several hours. Newsboys were selling fresh extras in front of the railroad stations: BLOODSHED IN ST. PETERSBURG . . . REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA. . . .

Sitting on the station steps, I read the latest bulletins. On the morning of January 9, tremendous crowds of workers assembled in industrial precincts of the capital and processions started toward the Winter Palace. Some carried national banners; others, icons and the portrait of the Tsar. Father Gapon—the German newspapers omitted the Italian "i" at the end—headed the largest procession, marching from the Putilov district. Troops barred all routes to the center of the city.

In the general confusion, the crowds did not hear the order to stop, if any was given. Nor did they understand the meaning of the trumpet preceding the order to fire. Hundreds fell dead under the

[2] Actually, the priest's name was Gapon, a Ukrainian name. Italian newspapers had Italianized it.